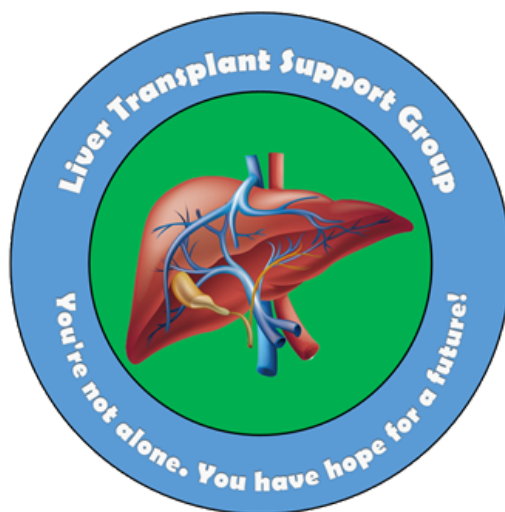


Northern California Organ Transplant Support

www.norcaltransplantsupport.org



Sunday, August 13 -- 1:00pm-3:30 pm

A Zoom presentation

To Join the **Zoom** Meeting just click on the highlighted link below and enter if you dare:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6737744254>

Meeting ID: 673 774 4254

Organ Procurement Organizations are getting Nervous!

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) play an important role in managing and caring for the Nation's health. They are among other things responsible for the performance of OPOs across the country. They both share responsibility for overseeing organ donation, procurement and the overall transplantation system. A recent study they performed concluded that the need for organ transplants in the US is only going to get more intense as the future

unfolds. OPO performance is being looked at as one means of attacking this future supply and demand crisis. Not all OPOs perform equally. CMS and HRSA managers are contemplating a more objective look at performance standards faced by the 56 OPOs across all UNOS regions. Soon to be gone are the days when OPOs can evaluate their own performances. Stay tuned for changes.

July 09 Meeting Notes

Our July meeting began on **zoom** at 1:15PM. In attendance were Jim Deyo, Spencer Baker, Eileen Chandler, Pam Stratford, Scott Thompson, Jan Escamilla, Dave Hawkyard, Renee Hawkyard, Casey Locke, Dee Britton, a new member, Tyler (Pre-transplant), Nancy Bepler, Nima, President of the San Francisco Bay Area Trio Support Group and Bob Bilyeu. After general discussion members introduced themselves and gave us a glance at their personal journey into the world of organ transplantation. There was some discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of using organs from deceased donors as opposed to live volunteers. It was pointed out that though there are always exceptions, organs coming from live donors are usually less problematic than are transplants from deceased donors, but only marginally so as of this moment. Even so, because the number of live donors is such a small subset of the total number of transplants performed, it is difficult to say much more than that for liver and kidney transplants. Not much more information was said on this subject. There was discussion about the group participating in a second post Covid-19 pandemic outdoor picnic in one of the many parks in Sacramento. A date was not set, but a preference for October was mentioned. Jim said he would bring the subject up at our next meeting. Renee' Hawkyard had previously suggested Rusch Park was a good location. She volunteered to investigate and report next month. It was suggested by someone that there are plenty of parks in Sacramento, so if anyone has any ideas, please don't hesitate to let us know. Eileen pointed out not very many people attended our last in-person meeting, so possibly the whole idea should be re-examined. On the same subject Jim Deyo mentioned he planned on attending TRIO's outdoor picnic in July.

There were comments made about various kidney problems both prior to and after kidney transplants. On another tack someone mentioned UCDavis Med Center is probably a good place for a person experiencing kidney or liver problems because they are getting close to beginning their new liver transplant program and are surely accepting patients for treatment and possible future transplants. The meeting adjourned at 2:56PM.

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The Senate Finance Committee met in session on August 3, 2023 to investigate and report on the nation's organ donation and transplantation network. The opening statement by Senator Wyden, of Oregon was critical of the United Network for Organ Sharing, UNOS. He laid out many reasons why UNOS and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, OPTN, is failing the American public. Brian Shepard, the CEO of UNOS defended UNOS and the OPTN, and pointed out they have always strived to improve process and function. He welcomed anything positive coming out of these hearings. The Senate Finance Committee has been investigating the nation's transplantation problems for the past three years, according to Senator Chuck Grassley, R, Iowa, a senior member of the Finance Committee. The speakers to this committee this day laid the foundation for why change is needed. The current contract UNOS has with the government is up the end of September 2023. The new system will allow and permit competitive services for 2024. As has been pointed out changes are coming and indeed are already being implemented.

**The following House and Senate bills are now on President Biden's desk awaiting signature:**

**HR 2544**, Securing the US Organ Procurement and Transplantation Act –

introduced by Representatives Larry Bucshon (R-IN) and Robin Kelly (D-IL), Amends the Public Health Service Act to allow for competition within the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) contract process. The legislation also makes technical changes and requires the Comptroller General to conduct a review of the OPTN -- to US Senate for Consideration - 07-20-2023

**S.1668, Senate version of HR2544, Securing the US Organ Procurement and Transplantation Act** Introduced by Senator Ron Wyden, D, Or, (Introduced 05/17/2023) The bill expressly authorizes competition and awards multiple grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to support the operation of the network. to President Biden for signature – 07-31-2023

## First robotic liver transplant in U.S.



Transplant surgeon Adeel Khan, MD, controls a surgical robot. A surgical team from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis led by Khan recently performed the first robotic liver transplant in the U.S. in May 2023 at Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

Last month we looked at the role of artificial intelligence in the field of organ transplantation. In that little article we talked about how AI is already busy and will continue to help prevent such things as the need for a transplant, improving organ matching, increasing available organs, preventing and mitigating rejection and improving after care. This note adds how AI is being used for the actual transplant surgery. The first use of AI in whole organ transplant surgery took place at Washington University and School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. This procedure uses smaller incisions, making it less invasive, makes needed surgical cuts more precisely, promises less surgical pain and faster recovery time. Three months post-transplant and the patient is doing well, has resumed normal activities and is back to enjoying life. You may recall a South Korean transplant team performing an AI assisted liver transplant in 2021. That procedure was only partially robotic. The diseased portion of the liver was removed laparoscopically with the implant being robotic.

## **This Month's Meeting: Sunday, August 13, 2023**

**1PM – 3:30PM**

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## ***About Today...***

We hope you can make the upcoming meeting this Sunday. We recognize everyone leads busy lives. But we are a support group and as such our success in helping people with pre and post-transplant issues depends on us being there to help each other when we can. Lately we have seen new people coming to our meetings. Renee' and Dave Hawkyard have been successful in getting people to check us out via **Zoom** and so have others. It's a sure bet at this coming meeting there will be new people you have not met. By the way, remember if you come across someone who has a good reason to come to our meeting, please think to recommend they stop by. If you know one of our members needs to be reminded to come, call him or her. They will thank you for your concern. Give them access to our **Zoom** portal and the access code. You know all are welcome. If you haven't been to a meeting recently, now is a good time to check us out. Your very presence at the meeting shows pre and post-transplant folks they are not alone, adrift in a vast sea taking them who knows where. Who knows more about post-transplant issues and how they can be dealt with than us? We can demonstrate to them the depth and breadth of our organ transplant knowledge and experience. This is a big deal. We can provide help, encouragement and understanding to people who are having real problems. As a group, we can make a difference in people's lives and provide great comfort. Sometimes just seeing people actively participating in discussions is enough to give encouragement and hope. Hope to see you there!!! ~~~ Cheers!!!

### **Agenda**

- **Welcome**
- **Introductions**
- **Picnic, October 8; 11AM-3:00PM**
- **Bay Area & Sacramento Donate Life Run/Walk**
  - **Social Media Footprint**
  - **New UNOS Policies**
  - **Open discussion**
  - **Member Story**
  - **Adjournment**

## ***Don't Forget check out our Website!!!:***

*Let us Know What you Think!*

If you haven't done so, just type in: [www.norcaltransplantsupport.org](http://www.norcaltransplantsupport.org). You will see what your website team has created. It goes a long way toward telling our tale. Please take the time to go over what was designed by our team of volunteers, Jan Escamilla, Eileen Chandler, Renee and David Hawkyard, Scott Thompson, Jim Deyo, Spencer Baker, Sandy and a few others.

| 2023<br>Meeting Dates |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| January 8             | July 9           |
| February 12           | August 13        |
| March 12              | September 10     |
| April 16              | October 8 Picnic |
| May 21                | November 12      |
| June 11               | December 10      |

#### [Our Leadership Team](#)

President – Jim Deyo.....Jdeyo@att.net  
 Vice President – Spencer Baker.....srbaker98@yahoo.com  
 Secretary..... (to be determined)  
 Treasurer..... (to be determined)  
 Newsletter –Bob Bilyeu.....bob\_bilyeu@yahoo.com

**Editor's Note:** If you have ideas regarding subjects you'd like to address or if you found value in this newsletter, please let us know. Contact Bob Bilyeu at [bob\\_bilyeu@yahoo.com](mailto:bob_bilyeu@yahoo.com) or call at (916) 675-2721

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